

REMARKS

Claims 1, 2, 4 – 7, 8, 9 and 11 – 17 are now pending in the application. Claims 15 – 17 are allowed. Claims 3 – 7 and 10 – 14 are indicated as allowable if rewritten in independent form. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejections in view of the remarks contained herein.

At the outset, Applicant notes that claim 1 has been amended herein to incorporate the allowable subject-matter of claim 3. Claim 3 has been cancelled herein without prejudice. Claims 4 and 5 have been amended to depend from claim 1 in view of cancelled claim 3.

Claim 8 has been amended herein to incorporate the allowable subject-matter of claim 10. Claim 10 has been cancelled herein without prejudice. Claims 11 and 12 have been amended to depend from claim 8 in view of cancelled claim 10.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1, 2, 8, and 9 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Nakaniwa (U.S. Pat. No. 5,227,975). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

As discussed above, claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the allowable subject-matter of claim 3. Therefore, claim 1 defines over the prior art and reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

Claim 2 depends from claim 1, which defines over the prior art, as discussed above. Therefore, claim 2 also defines over the prior art for at least the reasons stated

with respect to claim 1, and reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

Claim 8 has been amended to incorporate the allowable subject-matter of claim 10. Therefore, claim 8 defines over the prior art and reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

Claim 9 depends from claim 8, which defines over the prior art, as discussed above. Therefore, claim 9 also defines over the prior art for at least the reasons stated with respect to claim 8, and reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER

Claims 15 – 17 are allowed.

The Examiner states that claims 3 – 7 and 10 – 14 are objected to and would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Applicants have amended claims 1 and 8, as discussed in detail above. Each of claims 4 – 7 and 11 – 14 depend from one of claims 1 and 8, which define over the prior art. Therefore, claims 4 – 7 and 11 – 14 also define over the prior art for at least the reasons discussed above with respect to claims 1 and 8, and reconsideration and withdrawal of the objections are respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

It is believed that all of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw all presently outstanding rejections. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. Thus, prompt and favorable consideration of this amendment is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (313) 665-4969.

Respectfully submitted,

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